



Surrey Heath Borough Council

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Mr D. Thomson
Senior Director, Environment
RPS Planning & Development
140 London Wall
London EC2Y 5DN

1 June 2018

Dear Mr Thomson

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT FAIROAKS

EIA SCOPING OPINION BY SURREY HEATH BOROUGH COUNCIL, RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL AND WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL UNDER REGULATION 15 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2017

I refer to your request for an EIA scoping opinion (cover letter and Fair Oaks Garden Village Scoping Report April 2018) received by email on Monday 23 April 2018. In accordance with regulation 15 (4) of the 2017 Regulations I refer to Philippa Coates' email on the 23 May 2018 agreeing to an extension of time until Friday 1 June 2018.

This response forms the joint opinion of Surrey Heath, Runnymede and Woking councils and is informed by the appended responses received from the consultation bodies including:

- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- Highways England
- Historic England
- Surrey Council Council
(Highways, Heritage/Archaeology, Minerals and Waste, Infrastructure)
- Surrey Wildlife Trust

In addition, responses from internal departments are appended including environmental health departments.

This letter details the authorities' main conclusions. A Schedule of Comments with chapter by chapter comments is also appended which provides further details and cross references with the consultation responses. All authorities confirm that sufficient information has been provided to adopt a scoping opinion and all authorities are of the opinion that this is good quality Scoping Report.



Topics scoped in and out

In respect of Table 5 and chapters 5 and 6 of the Scoping Report it is agreed that Socio-Economics; Landscape, Visual and Built Heritage; Biodiversity; Water Environment; Transportation and Access; Air Quality; and, Noise and Vibration should all be scoped in. It is also agreed that Archaeology; Waste Management; Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing; Wind; Climate Change; Human Health; Agriculture and Soils; and, Risk of Major Accidents and/or Disasters should all be scoped out.

However, all authorities are of the opinion that 'Ground Conditions and Contamination' should be scoped in. This is because the existing airfield site is considered to be a contaminative use and may require a high level of remediation. Contaminates could cause pollution to the groundwater aquifer. Therefore the extent of the potential impacts cannot be deferred to conditions as environmentally this could have effects upon other ES topic areas including, for example, Water Environment and Biodiversity. This opinion is supported by the Environment Agency and comments from SHBC's Scientific Officer.

It is noted that no consideration has been given to a Recreation and Amenity chapter. Nonetheless, the authorities are satisfied that this could be scoped out.

Sensitivity testing

Paragraph 2.29 explains the intended approach for the A320 Link Road with Figure 1 illustrating the broad area of land where this road would be located. As explained in the table appended to this letter it is considered that greater detail is required on the environmental effects of this corridor as part of the outline application ES. This link road is fundamental to the overall site delivery and so it is critical to have sufficient detail within the outline ES to preclude unforeseen environmental obstacles to delivery beyond Phase 1. It is not considered appropriate in this case to exclude the detail of this corridor for a Reserved Matters ES (Associated to this, and whilst not directly related to EIA Scoping, the red line site location plan needs to include the A320 access).

Paragraphs 2.18 and 3.4 apply a sensitivity test of 5% uplift on the proposed residential units of 1,000 (i.e. 1,050) to order to present a worst case for certain environmental and socio-economic effects. There is concern that this margin may be too low. A higher percentage may provide the applicant with greater flexibility, by accounting for any potential changes made to density figures, and would also account for the future growth of the development.

Cumulative effects

Table 2 summarises cumulative schemes to be considered within the ES. This table only lists committed developments, which have not yet begun construction, based upon the criteria in paragraph 3.24.

Whilst paragraph 3.26 is noted, there is insufficient explanation as to why a 4 km distance has been applied and why developments beyond this have been discounted. The authorities question the validity of this arbitrary approach as major sized developments further away than 4 km may still result in significant effects. If 4 km is to be used it should be measured from the transport corridor as well as the development. The potential for cumulative effect of the transport corridor with other schemes, not just transport effects of residential schemes, should also be considered.

For example, the reserve housing sites within Surrey Heath ought to be considered. Appended to this letter is a list of the constituent West End Reserve Sites permissions that demonstrates that incrementally each site will deliver more than 150 dwellings (albeit partly under construction) and consideration ought to be given to the cumulative effect with these developments. This table also omits the outline permission (15/0590) at Heathpark Wood,

Windlesham for 140 dwellings on a site that exceeds 5 hectares; and, the hybrid outline planning permission (ref. 15/0067) granted at the former British Oxygen Corporation, Chertsey Road, Windlesham for urban development on a site that exceeds 5 hectares with built form totalling 13,864 m²

It is also advisable that you don't just consider sites that have consent but those sites where planning applications have been made, or about to be made where sufficient information exists. For example, there is an outline planning application (ref. 18/0327) for 248 dwellings at Waters Edge, 220 Mychett Road, Mytchett.

In addition, and notwithstanding the 2017 Regulations, the authorities still consider it prudent to include developments that are reasonably foreseeable to come forward during the lifetime of the Fair Oaks build-out to ensure a robust assessment. This could also potentially include sites that are at an advanced stage in the allocation process. The list is not exhaustive but on the basis of the threshold criteria this ought to include Longcross South and Martyrs Lane, within Runnymede and Woking boroughs respectively.

Your attention is also drawn to Annex A of Natural England's response, which stresses the importance of considering all potential cumulative and in-combination effects.

Alternative sites

Paragraph 3.16 states that because no alternative sites are within the applicant's ownership, alternative sites have not been examined by the EIA. The PPG states that the 2017 Regulations do not require consideration of alternatives, however, regulation 18 (3) (d) and paragraph 2 of Schedule 4 of the 2017 Regulations does require a consideration of reasonable alternatives. It is therefore considered that it would be in the applicant's best interests to give greater consideration to any reasonable alternative sites, notwithstanding the ownership situation.

Other key comments

Attention is drawn to the comments on the Landscape and Visual Effects including the timeframes for photomontages. Surrey Heath has not previously agreed viewpoints (as stated at paragraph 5.47) and RBC or WBC has not agreed views either.

It is advised that greater referencing to cross-chapter impacts is undertaken. The ES should specify exactly which chapters will be cross-referenced/sign-posted. Furthermore, it would be useful to include references to any environmental impacts which are only borough specific.

In respect of paragraph 3.35, and as further explained on the Schedule of Comments, it is important that the screening information to facilitate the HRA is not just appended but that relevant commentary is also incorporated into the relevant ES chapters. How this will be done ought to be set out as part of Volume 1. Annex A of Natural England's response provides further advice on the need to prepare an Appropriate Assessment.

Natural England also advises that a habitat survey (equivalent to Phase 2), impact assessment and mitigation proposals for Habitats and Species of Principal Importance should be included in the ES. Consideration should also be given to those species and habitats included in the relevant Local BAP.

Finally we have been copied in a resident's letter addressed to you. We would ask that any pertinent comments within this are taken into account in your EIA submission.

I hope that the above opinion is of assistance to you. If you have any questions about any of the matters raised above please contact Jonathan Partington at Surrey Heath.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Partington
Development Manager

(On behalf of)
Jenny Rickard
Executive Head of Regulatory

Copy to: Nick Lloyd-Davies (RBC); Brooke Bounague (WBC)